

New Programs Added

Isaac Wiles & the Great Seal of the State of Nebraska

by John Schleicher

This program provides an overview of the history of the Nebraska Territory and Nebraska statehood and examines the origins of the Great Seal of the State of Nebraska through the life and times of Isaac Wiles, who settled in Cass County in 1856, led the 1st Nebraska Militia during the Civil War, and served in both the territorial and state legislatures. While serving in the state legislature, Wiles introduced a bill to provide a seal for the State of Nebraska and created the state motto “Equality Before the Law.”

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Nebraska’s Landmark Buildings

by Jeff Barnes

From the first trader cabins through the skyscrapers of today, the buildings of Nebraska tell the story of the state. They carry the tales of pioneers, of its emigrant and ethnic groups, of its famous sons and daughters, of its suffering through war, its prosperity in peace, and of its innovation and excellence.

Jeff Barnes, author of the new book 150 at 150: Nebraska’s Landmark Buildings at the State’s Sesquicentennial, features many of the buildings that have survived the decades, the architects who designed them, and the communities and people who used them. His talk also highlights Thomas Rogers Kimball, the state’s greatest architect and the newest inductee of the Nebraska Hall of Fame.

Additionally, Barnes will also feature local landmarks for each community presentation.

Contact Information

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by Bernard "Barney" McCoy

A screening and audience discussion by the producer/director of "Black Jack Pershing: Love and War."

The 56-minute documentary chronicles the historic life of WWI General John J. Pershing and his important Nebraska ties. Pershing's U.S. troops overcame the German military, helped the Allies win World War I, and contributed to America's emergence as a global superpower. To succeed, Pershing also had to overcome personal tragedy and heartbreak he could never speak of for the rest of his life. (1-1/2 hours are required for screening followed with a half hour audience discussion. A projector and sound system are required that would allow play of the documentary from a standard DVD or Bluray DVD.)

Contact Information

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Nebraska, Our Song

by Mary K. Stillwell

Join the editors and poets of Nebraska Presence, the 2018 One Book One Nebraska selection, in the exploration and celebration of our state's history and people. This program is part reading and part discussion. An editor (or two, depending on availability) and a small group of poets (depending on availability) will read their work, share the story of what inspired their poems, share the challenges of writing about our state, and discuss various themes found in the collection. This presentation encourages participation and can be adapted to the interests of the group, such as the exploration of family relationships, owning one's voice, the loss of the small farm and agrarian way of life, and the shadow side of "the good life." Please let us know of your special interests with your request. The audience will have ample time for a Q & A session.

Nebraska, Our Muse

by Mary K. Stillwell

Join the editors and poets of Nebraska Presence, the 2018 One Book One Nebraska selection, in the exploration and celebration of our state's history and people. This program is part reading, part writing, and part conversation. An editor (or two, depending on availability) and a small group of poets (again, depending on availability) will read work from Nebraska Presence that feature the landscape and inhabitants (past and present) of our state: the lay of the land, the people, nature (flora and fauna), animals of air, land, and sea and talk a bit about how these poems help us to better see and think about what is right before us. A short writing workshop will follow, with writing prompts and suggestions for exploring our state through writing poetry. Participants will share their work, if they wish, and poets will answer questions about writing as well as about sending out work and publishing.

Contact Information

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Stories from Nebraska's Agricultural History: Water

By Jody Lamp

Lamp honors Nebraska's agricultural history with stories of the spaces, places, inventions, commodities, events, and people that made Nebraska one of the top agricultural states in the nation and gave rise to such slogans as "The Beef State" and "The Cornhusker State." Lamp will enlighten and entertain with important and little know stories about the role of water in the development of western Nebraska, the digging of our irrigation ditches and canals, and our state's unique governance by local Natural Resource District boards.

Contact Information

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Water: Lakota Spirituality and Science

by Jerome Kills Small

Living with his grandparents, Kills Small gained personal experience being around Lakota sacred sites in southwestern South Dakota and place names for water in western Nebraska and brings this experience to a discussion of the source and spiritual aspects of water and how what the spirit says and what science says complement each other.

Contact Information

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Exploring a Native American Holistic View of Water

by Wynema Morris

Morris provides a look at the holistic view Native American peoples have of water, drawing comparisons between the Native and Euro-American views. The presentation includes the values of spirituality and religion, time, nature, sharing and acquisition, cooperation and competition, teaching and learning and acceptance of change.

Contact Information

Wynema Morris

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Mni Wiconi: Lakota for 'Water Is Life'

by Phyllis Stone

Mni Wiconi “Water Is Life” is taught in an origin story and has been essential to the Lakota people over their long history. Stone shares this history and the values it encompasses including the use of Mni Wiconi recently in the naming of a water pipeline project to the Pine Ridge Reservation and in the protests of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Contact Information

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The Power of Water in Art

by Susan Knight

Water is complex. It is a fractal. "It's one thing to read about aspects of water and quite another to discover them for myself through art." Join artist Susan Knight as she shares images of her hand cut art and discusses her discovery of personal meaning to translate information about the water cycle, surface water and groundwater into her two and three dimensional artwork.

Contact Information

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The Many Ways of Water: Poems and Stories

By Twyla M. Hansen

Hansen will read selections from her poetry and stories, and discuss how Nebraska’s water—its rivers, streams, and aquifer, as well as its landscape—has inspired, influenced and shaped her writing. Her writing uses a deep sense of place to make connections between the natural and human worlds, the water and the land and all inhabitants in poems and stories—from historic, economical, and environmental perspectives—about the human experience on the Plains. This presentation encourages audience comments/questions about their own water experiences, as well as on creative writing for their own stories.

The Many Ways of Water: Telling/Writing Your Stories

By Twyla M. Hansen

Water is Nebraska’s lifeblood, flowing in its many rivers and streams and springing from underground. It is also dammed into reservoir lakes and pumped from the aquifer onto crop fields. What is your connection to our state’s water resources, how does it impact your life? Do you live near one of our many rivers, creeks, lakes, or do you visit a favorite natural water location? Does your community have legends of drought, floods, or storms? Do you depend on water for a living, do you have concerns about it for the future? If you can tell a story, it can be written down; intergenerational storyteller/writer teams are encouraged. In this user-friendly workshop, Hansen will guide participants through a series of writing prompts to generate essays, stories, and/or poems. We will tell our special

stories to help us better understand our surroundings, our communities, and ourselves. For all levels of writers, middle school through adult.

Contact Information

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Platte Basin Timelapse

by Michael Farrell

The Platte River is a major watershed in the heart of the Great Plains. It waters crops and cattle, hosts resident and migrant wildlife, supplies thirsty cities, fuels power generators, and delights fishermen and boaters. Since 2011 60 time-lapse camera systems placed throughout the 90,000 square mile basin follow the water that makes a nearly 900 mile journey through the heart of North America. Project co-founder Farrell shares stories of the project through an evolving set of timelapse videos as well as photographs and edited videos.

My Path to the River

by Michael Farrell

Discover the motivations and history behind Farrell's personal involvement with Platte Basin Timelapse and the Platte River, beginning with his exposure to Native American beliefs about nature, experiencing the river as a filmmaker and continuing as a storyteller to bring people to an understanding of the river basin as a source of life and of our responsibility as we continue to determine and respond to the Platte's evolving future.

Contact Information

Michael Farrell
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The Power of Spoken Word

by Felicia Webster

Webster and fellow poets present a lyrical experience of African American culture through the mouths of poets. NOTE- Message and content will be adjusted as appropriate for specific audiences—Adults, children, education settings etc.

Contact Information

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Nebraskans and The Great War

by Spencer Davis

This presentation explores how three important Nebraskans of the time reacted to the war. William Jennings Bryan, who resigned as Secretary of State in President Woodrow Wilson's cabinet because of his opposition to the war; Senator George Norris, who opposed President Wilson's declaration of war; and Willa Cather, whose novel about the war won a Pulitzer Prize.

Contact Information

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Keith Blackledge and the North Platte Telegraph: His Town and Ours

by Chuck Salestrom and Carol Lomicky

This is the story of Keith Blackledge, editor of the North Platte Telegraph from 1967-1992 and passionate advocate behind innumerable community and statewide endeavors. Salestrom and Lomicky tell about Blackledge's contributions through the lens of his work as a newspaper editor and civic leader.

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Patriotic Panoramas

by Donna Gunn

Step behind the camera for a snapshot of our country's history through the lens of the music that paints great American moments in time. Float in the harbor with Frances Scott Key as you watch the bombing of Fort McHenry, experience Julia Ward Howe's angst on the eve of a Civil War battle, or climb to the top of Pike's Peak with Katherine Lee Bates. Sing the songs as first inspired. Donna segues seamlessly and artfully into piano solo arrangements based on each patriotic tune.

Contact Information

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Aprons, Skirts, Hats & Flirts: Calico Effects on the Westward Movement

by Marci Broyhill and Teresa Kay Orr

This light-hearted educational program presents the cultural, calming and workforce roles women brought to the tumultuous western movement. This program incorporates history and story through original compositions of memorized music and poetry. Sisters, Marci and Teresa enhance their presentation with PowerPoint and props from the era which include, but are not limited to: darning eggs, hair receiver, soap saver, dishware, foot warmer, aprons, hats, and a curling iron.

Contact Information

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Marion Marsh Brown: A Continuing Legacy in Nebraska Writing

by Dan Holtz

This program about Marion Marsh Brown explores the writing and teaching careers of the remarkable woman who is the namesake and inspiration for the Marion Marsh Brown Writers Lecture Series now hosted annually at Baxter Arena by the University of Nebraska-Omaha. The author of 20 published books, nine of which won national awards, Brown pursued a writing career that spanned the 1940's to the 1990's and was recognized by the Nebraska Council of Teachers of English as one of Nebraska's 10 most important writers in the late 1950's.

A pioneer in Nebraska writing, because she wrote in a variety of genres primarily for teenagers, Brown is the main link in a legacy of Nebraska writing which started in the 1870's with her father Cassius Marsh and continues to this day. Brown not only wrote about nationally known figures such as Nathan Hale and Francis Scott Key but also about notable Nebraskans, including Willa Cather, John Neihardt and Susan LaFlesche Picotte.

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The Better Half: Nebraska's Hidden Treasures

by Sarah Baker Hansen and Matthew Hansen

Omaha World-Herald food critic Sarah Baker Hansen grew up in suburban Omaha. Husband Matthew, World-Herald columnist, came from Red Cloud, population 1,000. In their book, "The Better Half," they

together explored the state from border to border. The book includes two dozen columns and restaurant stories, as well as dozens of other details on things to do, see, eat and drink in Nebraska. The Hansens speak about the experience of rediscovering their own home state; encouraging other Nebraskans to do the same is at the heart of their presentation. The Hansens will also talk about Nebraska's rural-urban divide, and what can unite us.

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The Huttites

by Stephen Lahey

Fifteenth-century Bohemia was the setting for the first revolution in history, when followers of Jan Hus, nobles, clergy, and peasants alike, rose up against Emperor and Pope. From 1419 to 1435, central Europe was dominated by the Hussites, who despite being outnumbered and without allies, triumphed and created their own kingdom. This talk will introduce the theologians and the generals who led the movement, the ideology that defined it, and the internal division that threatened to destroy it. This is a fascinating but not well known moment in history that continues to define Czech identity, and contributes importantly to the history of Christianity in Europe.

Contact Information

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The Nebraska Unicameral At Eighty: Does George Norris's Vision Still Live?

by Ron Jensen

Author Ron Jensen raises and discusses the question of whether George Norris's vision of a "model state legislature" still lives after eighty years of existence as the nation's only unicameral state legislature. Jensen examines what fundamentals Norris proposed and recounts a series of personal interviews with each living Speaker of the Legislature for their respective views of this central question, and adds his own analysis.

Contact Information

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Nebraskan at Heart: Joslyn's Eugene Kingman and the New York Times Mural

by Maureen Waldron

How did a native New Englander become an artist of the Midwest and West? And how did his most famous mural, commissioned for the main lobby of the New York Times building in New York City, find its home at Omaha's W. Dale Clark Main Library? Waldron answers these questions and tells a fascinating story of the life of Eugene Kingman, who was director of the Joslyn Art Museum from 1946 until 1968. This fast-paced program is illustrated with 115 PowerPoint slides, many of them artwork of Kingman's Nebraska scenes.

Contact Information

Maureen Waldron

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The Audacious, NE Saga -- Descendants of DeWitty

by Artes Johnson

DeWitty, later known as Audacious, was the largest and longest-lasting African American settlement in rural Nebraska. The settlers, including former slaves who had fled to Canada before the Civil War and their descendants, began to arrive in 1906-07, attracted by the 1904 Kinkaid Act's offer of 640 acres of free land in the Sandhills. Actual descendants of DeWitty re-enact stories of the settlement and its people, accompanied by historic photographs.

Contact Information

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No Time on My Hands: The Story of Grace Snyder

by Charlotte Endorf

Grace Snyder was born April 23rd, 1882 and lived to be 100. She moved to Nebraska with her parents from Missouri when she was only three. Grace had three wishes and dreamed three dreams. To grow up to make the most beautiful quilts in the world. To grow up and marry a cowboy and to look down on the top of a cloud. At the time, it seemed impossible that any of her dreams could ever come true. Kevin and Charlotte Endorf share Snyder's life story after countless hours of study. Enjoy the display Kevin and Charlotte have compiled of this woman clearly ahead of her time.

Contact Information

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World War I and the Treaty of Versailles: How the Treaty that Ended the "War to End All Wars" Helped Trigger World War II

by Thomas Berg

In July 1919, the Treaty of Versailles ended the war in which machine guns, artillery, tanks, aircraft, submarines, and poison gas killed millions of civilians and soldiers among the victorious and defeated nations alike. By November 1921, France, Great Britain, and the United States had reverentially buried their respective Unknown Soldier. Seemingly, the future looked peaceful, and humanity could again hope; however, this vision was an illusion that could not last. Within ten years, Mussolini became the dictator of Italy, Hitler tried to overthrow a German province, Stalin was the brutal dictator in the Soviet Union, and Japan attacked China; Asia and Europe were now on the road to war. How could so much hope contained in the Treaty of Versailles shatter twenty years later into the catastrophe of the Second World War?

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Kings of Broken Things: Bystanders, Historical Wounds, and the Omaha Race Riot of 1919

by Theodore Wheeler

Author Theodore Wheeler discusses the societal and personal factors that helped form his novel -- Kings of Broken Things -- an immigrant coming-of-age story set amid the political, economic and racial tensions surrounding the 1919 lynching of Will Brown. Along with personal reflections, the program features images of the riot and historical Omaha that inspired the novel, plus selected readings that bring to life historical events and figures. Wheeler addresses authorial responsibility and why he was compelled as a "bystander" white American to write a novel that deals heavily with ethnicity and violence. The presentation requires a computer, projector and screen to display an accompanying PowerPoint presentation.

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A Visit with Nebraska State Poet Matt Mason

By Matt Mason

Nebraska State Poet Matt Mason brings great love and excitement for poetry and wants to pass that on to audiences across the state. Matt shares the joy of poetry through reading his own work, reading poetry from favorite others, and encouraging audiences to ask questions. Matt can tailor his program to your group by bringing writing prompts to get everyone working, preparing particular topics such as poetry slam, or reading from and discussing certain poets or kinds of poetry, etc.

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Winning the Vote: The Campaign for Woman's Suffrage in the United States

by Dianne Bystrom

This presentation will trace the history of the 72-year campaign for women's right to vote in the United States, focusing on the final winning effort from 1915 to 1920 that led to the ratification of the 19th Amendment. The presentation will include the contributions of such leading suffragists as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Sojourner Truth, Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, Ida B. Wells, Alice Paul, Mary Church Terrell and Carrie Chapman Catt. It will also include information on the suffrage movement in Nebraska, which became the 14th state to ratify the 19th Amendment on August 2, 1919. This presentation is particularly timely as Nebraska and the nation begin plans to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which became part of the U.S. Constitution on August 26, 1920.

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The British Isles and Irish Sampler

by Chris Sayre

Chris Sayre presents the Songs and Melodies of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales performed on Button Accordion, English Concertina, fretted Dulcimer, Guitar, Mandolin, and Musical Saw. Travel across the Atlantic Ocean for a musical exploration of some of the early roots of our Folk and Country Music, including memorable ballads and humorous ditties.

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